

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the Application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An armed suture, comprising:

a needle having first and second opposed ends and a blind hole formed in said first end and extending longitudinally into said needle from said first end thereof, said hole including an upper edge, a sidewall, a bottom wall disposed at a location intermediate said opposed ends, said bottom wall having a substantially conical shape including an apex distal to said first end, and a length measured between said upper edge and said bottom wall, said hole having a first diameter at a first location proximate said upper edge and a second diameter at a second location proximate said bottom wall, said second diameter being greater than said first diameter;

a suture having an end thereof positioned in said hole and extending along said length thereof so as to terminate proximate said bottom wall, said end of said suture having a third diameter, wherein said first diameter is greater than said third diameter by a factor that allows said hole to accommodate the insertion of a range of differently-sized sutures therein;

a space disposed between said end of said suture and said conical-shaped bottom wall of said needle;

an adhesive having a viscosity, when uncured, permitting said suture to be inserted into said hole, [[and]] said adhesive, when cured, forming an annular mass that substantially surrounds said end of said suture along said length of said hole, so as to be in continuous contact with said sidewall of said hole along said length thereof, said annular adhesive mass having an outer diameter that is greater at said second location than at said first location, so as to form a mechanical interlock between said suture and said hole, and said adhesive being disposed within said space between said end of said suture and said conical bottom wall of said needle; and

means, located in said hole, for increasing the bond between said adhesive and said hole.

2. (Original) The armed suture of claim 1, wherein said adhesive is curable by exposure to electromagnetic radiation.

3. (Original) The armed suture of claim 2, wherein said electromagnetic radiation is UV light.

4. (Original) The armed suture of claim 3, wherein said adhesive is cyanoacrylate.

5. (Original) The armed suture of claim 2, wherein said adhesive is curable by a second curative agent.

6. (Original) The armed suture of claim 5, wherein said second curative agent is a compound.

7. (Original) The armed suture of claim 5, wherein said second curative agent is water.

8. (Original) The armed suture of claim 5, wherein said second curative agent is heat.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) The armed suture of claim 1, wherein said first diameter and said third diameter are selected such that there is an annular space between said first end of said needle and said suture, said annular space having a length substantially the same as said length of said hole, and wherein said annular space is dimensioned to ~~receive~~ contain said annular adhesive mass therein.

11. (Currently Amended) The armed suture of claim 1, wherein said hole is ~~formed by laser drilling~~ a laser-drilled hole.

12. (Previously Presented) The armed suture of claim 1, wherein said hole is unpolished.

13. (Withdrawn) The armed suture of claim 1 wherein said suture hole has at least one groove having an orientation with a component of extension perpendicular to an axial direction of said suture hole.

14. (Original) The armed suture of claim 1, wherein said suture is monofilament.

15. (Withdrawn) A method of making armed sutures, comprising the steps of:

(A) forming a needle hole in an end of a needle;

(B) applying an adhesive between an end of the suture and the needle hole;

(C) inserting a suture into the needle hole

(D) allowing the adhesive to at least partially cure.

16. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 13, further including a step of metering the adhesive onto the suture hole prior to said step of inserting.

17. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 16, further comprising a step of secondarily curing the adhesive.

18. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 17, wherein said step of secondarily curing is performed by exposure to at least one of a chemical curative and heat.

19. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 18, wherein the chemical curative is applied to the suture hole prior to said step of applying.

20. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 15, wherein said step of applying includes dipping an end of the suture into the adhesive prior to the step of inserting.

21. (Withdrawn) The armed suture of claim 1, wherein said bond increasing means includes a groove formed in said hole.

22. (Currently Amended) The armed suture of claim 1, wherein said bond increasing means includes a roughened portion of said sidewall of said hole.

23. (Currently Amended) The armed suture of claim 22, wherein said roughened portion ~~[[is]]~~ includes a reamed portion.

24. (Currently Amended) The armed suture of claim 22, wherein said roughened portion ~~[[is]]~~ includes a laser-drilled portion.

25. (Currently Amended) The armed suture of claim 22, wherein said roughened portion ~~[[is]]~~ includes an etched portion.

26. (Currently Amended) The armed suture of claim ~~[[22,]]~~ 1, wherein said conical bottom wall includes a roughened portion ~~includes a conical tip~~.

27. (Previously Presented) The armed suture of claim 1, further comprising a catalyst disposed within said hole.

28. (Currently Amended) The armed suture of claim 27, wherein said catalyst ~~is disposed between~~ forms a coating on said sidewall of said hole before ~~[[and]]~~ said adhesive is inserted into said hole.

29. (Previously Presented) The armed suture of claim 27, wherein said catalyst is cyanoacrylate.

30. (Currently Amended) The armed suture of Claim [[1,]] 27, wherein said ~~bottom wall has a substantially conical shape~~ catalyst is applied to a surface of said suture before said suture is inserted into said hole.

31. (Previously Presented) The armed suture of Claim 1, wherein said hole is bottle-shaped and said mechanical interlock is bottle-shaped.

32-34. (Cancelled)